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RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 2246
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1631
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE PRIORITY
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 001726

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [ASEC](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZ FOREIGN MINISTER ON POLITICS, ECONOMY,
SECURITY AND NGO PROBE

REF: A. BISHKEK 1706

[1](#)B. BISHKEK 1701

[1](#)C. BISHKEK 1621 (NOTAL)

[1](#)D. BISHKEK 1602 (NOTAL)

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Classified By: Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: In a December 1 meeting, the Ambassador and Foreign Minister Jekshenkulov discussed the current political, economic and security situation; the Procurator General's probe into the National Democratic Institute (NDI), International Republican Institute (IRI) and IFES;; and Kyrgyz-U.S. bilateral relations. On all fronts, the FM appeared positive, but he said concrete steps were needed to improve the economic situation. Jekshenkulov said that Kyrgyzstan would naturally maintain closer ties with CIS countries, implying that strengthening ties with the West was difficult because of the systemic and geographic distances. The FM acknowledged the effective manner in which Kyrgyzstan and the U.S. have worked together on security and economic development issues. Jekshenkulov said he had written to the Procurator General regarding the probe into our democracy partners, and he cautioned against considering the probe a "political action." The Ambassador thanked the FM for the Kyrgyz Government's cooperation in the investigation of the abduction/car-jacking of the USAID Country Representative's wife. END SUMMARY.

THE NEED FOR A STRONG ECONOMY, ABOVE ALL

[1](#)2. (C) On December 1, the Ambassador met with Foreign Minister Alikbek Jekshenkulov to preview key issues prior to the FM's meeting with SCA DAS Evan Feigenbaum December 3 at the OSCE Ministerial in Brussels. They discussed the current political, economic, and security situation; the Procurator General's investigation of NDI, IRI and IFES; and Kyrgyz-U.S. bilateral relationship. The FM was generally positive about the bilateral relationship, as well as Kyrgyzstan's political and economic development, but he also emphasized the importance of U.S. assistance to economic development. As an

example of the ways in which the U.S. could provide assistance in this area, Jekshenkulov referred to the Kyrgyz-American Business Council and the Fund for the Support of Entrepreneurs -- two mechanisms that existed some years ago. Jekshenkulov added that once the overall economic situation improved, all other bilateral political and security issues would "fall into place." The Ambassador detailed for the FM some U.S. projects in the economic sphere, including an update on the Regional Energy Market Assistance Program (REMAP). Jekshenkulov appeared interested, but said that detailed information about the project is necessary to determine priorities.

13. (C) The FM noted that closer political and economic relations were easier to achieve with the countries of the CIS, than with the U.S., due to historical, systemic, and geographic ties with those countries. Jekshenkulov said that Kyrgyzstan was "far from Europe" and the West, and thus "had no choice" but to stay closer to the Commonwealth. The Ambassador said that a balance can exist with the West and CIS, referencing Kyrgyzstan's potential for increased energy exports and the USG's willingness to provide assistance in that area.

CONFUSION OVER ACTIVITIES OF PROCURATOR GENERAL

14. (C) Regarding the Procurator's probe into the local activities of NDI, IRI and IFES (Refs A and B), Jekshenkulov said that he sent a letter to the Procurator General, inquiring about the investigation. He urged the Ambassador not to view the Procurator's activities as a "political action." Jekshenkulov claimed that he was not aware of the details surrounding the probe, and that more information was needed before the MFA could respond to the Embassy's

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diplomatic note on the matter. The FM added that even Kyrgyz sometimes have trouble understanding each other and their motivations, making it much more difficult to comprehend what was happening. The Ambassador said that it was difficult to understand the Procurator's probe as anything but a political signal, since the Procurator did not have a specific complaint against any of the three organizations, and all three are U.S. democracy NGOs.

COOPERATION KEY FOR SECURITY

15. (C) The Ambassador thanked the FM for the government's assistance and cooperation in the investigation into the abduction of the wife of the USAID Country Representative (Refs C and D). Unaware of the particulars surrounding the case, Jekshenkulov did point out that crime -- organized crime in particular -- remains a problem in Kyrgyzstan, affecting MFA employees as well. To help curb the activities of criminal elements throughout the country, the FM hoped that U.S. and Kyrgyz authorities could continue to cooperate in a constructive manner, to avoid the possibility of the Embassy having to issue a travel warning for Kyrgyzstan. The Ambassador added that if the Embassy's Surveillance Detection Team had been in place, the incident might have been prevented. The Ambassador also told the FM that she had already requested PM Kulov to take the matter of the SD Team under his jurisdiction for resolution, adding that the safety of Embassy employees and their families is a matter of great importance for all concerned parties, including the MFA.

16. (C) COMMENT: We are not certain to what the Foreign Minister was referring when he brought up the "Kyrgyz-American Business Council" and the "Fund for the Support of Entrepreneurs." We have asked the MFA for additional information. Over the years, there have been different proposals to promote business cooperation between the U.S. and Kyrgyzstan. Several years ago, current MP Bolotbek Maripov and a group of Kyrgyz businessmen approached

the Embassy to set up an organization that would enable Kyrgyz businesses to interact with their American counterparts, but the idea soon died without funding. There was also a small group of businessmen and bankers that met on an ad hoc basis. According to preliminary information from the MFA, a "Kyrgyz-American Business Council" was set up seven or eight years ago; it initially participated in meetings in the U.S. during Kyrgyz ministerial visits, but has otherwise been inactive. (Note: The FM was not referring to the American Chamber of Commerce in Kyrgyzstan, which was established in 2005 and has grown to approximately 70 members. End note). With the "Fund for the Support of Entrepreneurs," the Foreign Minister may have been referring to request made earlier this year to USAID to fund a "Competitiveness Support Fund" and a proposal in 2004 to establish a "Kyrgyz-American Fund for Business Cooperation." We will continue to work with the MFA to develop further details of the FM's ideas, but we have our doubts whether such programs could produce positive results until Kyrgyzstan takes concrete steps to improve its business and investment climate.

YOVANOVITCH